

Message Text

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ORIGIN SS-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NSCE-00 CCO-00 SSO-00 /015 R

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DRAFTED BY:S/S-O:A SHANKLE

APPROVED BY:S/S-O:A SHANKLE DEW

DESIRED DISTRIBUTION: S/S, NSC/E

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P 281931Z MAY 75 ZFF4

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 123792 TOSEC 020061

LIMDIS

FOR HARTMAN

THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE SENT TO SECSTATE PARIS DTG O 281634Z MAY 75
FM LISBON

QUOTE

CONFIDENTIAL LISBON 2989

LIMDIS

DEPT PASS SECY PARTY FOR ASST SECY HARTMAN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, PO

SUBJECT: PRESENT ASSESSMENT OF PORTUGUESE POLITICAL SITUATION
FOR PRESIDENT'S MEETING WITH VASCO GONCALVES

1. THE CRISIS OF THE PAST TWO WEEKS, WHICH NOW SHOWS SIGNS OF
BREAKING, REPRESENTS MORE A FUNDAMENTAL CONFLICT BETWEEN THE
PARTY STRUCTURE AND THE RULING AFM THAN A LEFT-RIGHT CONFRONTA-
TION, ALTHOUGH COMMUNISTS PROBABLY SPARKED IT BEHIND
SCENES AND HAVE EXPLOITED IT TO INGRATIATE THEMSELVES EVEN
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MORE WITH AFM. PRIOR TO ELECTIONS NO REAL CHALLENGE TO
MILITARY EXISTED; ALL PARTIES PROFERRED SUPPORT. NOW FOR THE
FIRST TIME AFM AND SOCIALISTS ARE TRADING BROADSIDES RATHER
THAN BEHIND THE SCENES SCORN AND MUTED PUBLIC CRITICISM. ON

BALANCE MILITARY WILL PREVAIL BUT AT A PRICE TO THEIR PUBLIC IMAGE AND SUPPORT.

2. ELECTIONS ARE CLEARLY ORIGIN OF CRISIS. THEY RAISED THE QUESTION, WHAT CONFERRED LEGITIMACY? THE AFM'S REVOLUTION OR THE VOTE FOR THE SOCIALISTS? WHILE AFM WILL NOT GIVE UP ONE INCH OF ITS AUTHORITY IT WISHES TO AVOID THE STIGMA OF ABOLISHING THE PARTIES AND BECOMING AN OVERT DICTATORSHIP.

3. THIS IS WHY SOME PAPERED-OVER COMPROMISE WILL PROBABLY EMERGE WITHIN NEXT COUPLE OF DAYS. GOP HAS PUBLICLY SAID IT WANTS A REPUBLICA NEWSPAPER TO REOPEN, BUT MATTER IS IN HANDS OF COURTS. FOR THEIR PART SOCIALISTS ATTENDED TODAY'S CABINET MEETING ON ANGOLA "ON AN EXCEPTIONAL" BASIS.

4. NEVERTHELESS THE MILITARY WILL EMERGE FROM THIS CRISIS, AS THEY HAVE FROM ALL CRISES EVEN MORE CONVINCED OF THEIR HIGHER MORALITY. THEIR DISDAIN FOR PARTIES IS ALMOST TOTAL. SOARES IS NOW ANATHEMA; MORE A EUROPEAN THAN A PORTUGUESE. MANY ARE ALSO RESENTFUL OF THE ROLE PLAYED BY THE PCP AND INCLINED TO SAY A PLAGUE ON ALL THEIR HOUSES (SARAIVA DE CARVALHO).

5. CUNHAL, KNOWING THIS, HAS SOUNDED THREE THEMES; (A) PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR AFM (DEMONSTRATION SCHEDULED FOR TONIGHT, (B) A WARNING THAT AFM NEEDS PCP AS THE ONLY RELIABLE LINK TO THE PEOPLE AND (C) A HINT THAT PCP WOULD AGREE TO THE ABOLITION OF PARTIES IF THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY IS CANCELLED AS WELL. IN OTHER WORDS THEY CONTINUE TO PLAY ALL THEIR CARDS ON RELIANCE ON AFM, BOTH PUBLICLY AND BEHIND THE SCENES.

6. AT LEAST SOME AFM MEMBERS ARE NERVOUS ABOUT THE PCP, BUT AFM BACKED ITSELF INTO A CORNER. IT IS RELUCTANT TO ABOLISH PARTIES AND BECOME OVERT DICTATORSHIP, YET IT CANNOT TOLERATE OPPOSITION. THE RESULT IS THAT EXTREMISTS WIN ONCE AGAIN. A WAY, THEY SAY, MUST BE FOUND TO BYPASS THE PARTIES. THUS THE MILITARY WILL TAKE ON AN EVEN MORE PRONOUNCED ROLE--CULTURAL DYNAMIZATION, CIVIC ACTION AND POSSIBLY EVEN DIRECT CONFIDENTIAL

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POLITICAL CONTACTS, ANYTHING NECESSARY TO BYPASS THE POLITICAL LEADERSHIP. WE CAN EXPECT THAT THIS CAMPAIGN WILL BE RUN BY THE RADICALS IN THE MILITARY.

7. WHILE THIS LATEST STEP TO THE LEFT IS SO FAR PRINCIPALLY PSYCHOLOGICAL (PENDING A DEFINITION OF THE MECHANISM TO BYPASS PARTIES), THE MANIFESTATIONS OF WHO WON THE POWER STRUGGLE ARE AFM ASSEMBLY'S VOTE OF CONFIDENCE TO VASCO GONCALVES, YESTERDAY'S PROMOTIONS OF GONCALVES AND SARAIVA DE CARVALHO TO GENERAL RANK AND THE REDUCTION IN THE MILITARY RETIREMENT AGE TO 60 (COSTA GOMES IS 61).

8. THIS CRISIS WILL NOT BE THE LAST. SOCIALISTS, UNDER

PRESSURE FROM RANK-AND-FILE AND EUROPEANS, WILL CONTINUE TO
PRESS FOR LARGER ROLE WITHOUT ILLUSIONS THAT SUCH ROLE WILL
BE GRANTED. ANGOLA LOOMS LARGE AND ECONOMIC PROBLEMS ARE
MOUNTING. SLOGANS, SONGS, AND SELF RIGHTIOUS MORALIZING CANNOT
SUBSTITUTE FOR GOVERNING, AND THERE IS NO GOVERNMENT. THERE ARE
STILL MODERATE VOICES WITHIN THE AFM, THE SOCIALISTS ARE STILL
ALIVE, AND COSTA GOMES IS STILL IN PLACE, BUT THESE ARE
WASTING ASSETS AS THE PSYCHOLOGY OF CRISIS SEEMS TO
WORK CONSISTENTLY TO THE ADVANTAGE OF FORCES INIMICAL TO OUR
INTERESTS.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 26 AUG 1999
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CHIEFS OF STATE MEETINGS, POLITICAL SITUATION, TOSEC 20061
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 28 MAY 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ElyME
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975STATE123792
Document Source: ADS
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: SHANKLE
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: n/a
Film Number: D750186-0793
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t197505104/baaaakyw.tel
Line Count: 124
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, TEXT ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ElyME
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 21 MAY 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <21 MAY 2003 by CunninFX>; APPROVED <06 OCT 2003 by ElyME>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> jms 971010
Subject: n/a
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, PO, (FORD, GERALD R), (GONCALVES, VASCO)
To: SECRETARY
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006